

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SES-02 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15

L-03 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 HA-05 H-01 ACDA-12

OMB-01 TRSE-00 AID-05 EB-08 /085 W

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FM AMEMBASSY SANA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5666

INFONCMRA/AMEMBASSY JIDDA 3812

USMTM RIYADH

CHUSMTM DHAHRAN

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE

SECDEF WASHDC

S E C R E T SANA 3991

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, YE, US

SUBJ: PRIME MINISTER ON ARMS TO YEMEN TALKS

SUMMARY: YAR PRIME MINISTER, LEARNING TODAY FROM CHARGE OF OUTCOME OF ARMS TALKS THREE DAYS AGO, URGES USG TO "CONTINUE TO TALK" AND "NOT BE DISCOURAGED." END SUMMARY.

1. PRIME MINISTER ABD GHANI CALLED IN CHARGE TODAY, AUGUST 14, NOMINALLY TO ASK ABOUT FORTHCOMING TRIP TO UNITED STATES. REAL REASON, IT QUICKLY MATERIALIZED, WAS TO INQUIRE ABOUT OUTCOME OF LAST WEEKEND OF TALKS ON ARMS FOR YEMEN. CHARGE TOLD PRIME MINISTER THAT PUBLIC LINE EMBASSY TAKING HERE WAS THAT TALKS HAD BEEN FULL AND FAR-REACHING AND EXPANDED ARMS PROGRAM FOR YEMEN WAS UNDER REVIEW. I ADDED THAT PRIME MINISTER, HOWEVER, SHOULD UNDERSTAND THAT TALKS HAD BEEN DISAPPOINTING FAILURE AND WHILE WE WERE DETERMINED TO BEGIN ANEW IT WAS NOT EXACTLY CLEAR HOW.

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2. I GAVE HIM BRIEF OUTLINE OF MILITARY PROGRAM WE OFFERED AND APPARENT REASONS FOR YEMENI REJECTION OF PROGRAM.

3. PRIME MINISTER WAS VISIBLY TAKEN BACK. IT IS CLEAR HE HAD NO IDEA THAT TALKS HAD BEEN ANYTHING BUT SMOOTH AND SUCCESSFUL. HE LISTENED CLOSELY WHILE I EXPLAINED

TO HIM HOW UNLIKELY IT WAS, IN MY VIEW, THAT USG WOULD CRANK UP MASSIVE MILITARY PROGRAM FINANCED WITH MAP FUNDS. I TOOK OCCASION LIGHTLY SKETCH IN OUR VIEWS OF IMPORTANCE OF ORGANIZING DEFENSE OF YEMEN WITHIN REGIONAL FRAMEWORK OF COOPERATION AND USING DIPLOMATIC AND ECONOMIC WEAPONS IN ADDITION TO MILITARY WEAPONS. I MENTIONED ABSORBITIVE CAPACITY AS KEY TO PROGRAM. I TALKED ABOUT RISKS OF ESCALATION AND SUGGESTED -- PRIME MINISTER AGREED -- THAT YEMEN DID NOT WANT TO BECOME SCENE OF CONFLICT BETWEEN GREAT POWERS. I CONCLUDED BY ASKING HIS OPINION ON NEXT STEPS.

4. PRIME MINISTER'S ADVICE WAS "NOT TO BE DISCOURAGED" AND "CONTINUE TO TALK." HE WAS CLEARLY UNCERTAIN ABOUT WHAT HE MIGHT BE ABLE TO DO AND SAY IN THIS MATTER, WHERE HE IS ALMOST COMPLETELY CUT OUT. I REPLIED THAT WE HAD ALREADY RESOLVED TO MOVE ALONG LINES HE HAD RECOMMENDED BUT HOPED THAT YEMENI FRIENDS AND ADVISERS OF PRESIDENT WOULD EXPLAIN AMERICAN VIEWS TO PRESIDENT AND PUT MILITARY ISSUES IN DIPLOMATIC CONTEXT. PRIME MINISTER SAID HE WOULD BE SITTING THIS EVENING WITH PRESIDENT PRIOR TO GOING TO AMERICA BUT MADE NO COMMITMENT ABOUT WHAT HE MIGHT SAY OR DO EXCEPT TO CONVEY, ON OUR BEHALF, STRONG DESIRE TO LOOK FOR WAYS TO CONTINUE TO COOPERATE.

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5. COMMENT: PRIME MINISTER IS GOOD CONDUIT TO PRESIDENT. HE IS SOPHISTICATED OBSERVER OF POLITICAL SCENE IN SAUDI ARABIA AND MAN WHO IS UNIVERSALLY HELD TO BE HONEST AND STRAIGHTFORWARD. STRONGLY SUGGEST THAT DURING TALKS IN WASHINGTON WE DEVELOP IN SOME DETAIL OUR VIEWS ABOUT THREAT FROM SOUTH AND MEANS OF MEETING IT TO INCLUDE NON-MILITARY AS WELL AS MILITARY STEPS. THIS WOULD BE JUST ONE ELEMENT IN WHAT WILL CLEARLY HAVE TO BE BROADER AND VERY CAREFULLY CONSIDERED EFFORT TO SELL ALI ABDALLAH SALIH ON PROGRAM OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE WHICH IS AS LIMITED AS WE ARE LIKELY TO PROPOSE.
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